



# Research in Germany - Artificial Intelligence -



Research in Artificial Intelligence in Germany is primarily conducted at universities but also at non-university research institutes. The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) is a major funding organisation to support artificial intelligence research. Important German research organisations such as the Fraunhofer Society (applied research), the Leibniz Association (basic and applied research) and the Max Planck Society (basic research) maintain own research institutes with a major focus on artificial intelligence. Some artificial intelligence research institutes and programmes are funded directly by the federal and state governments. There exist also private and public foundations that support artificial intelligence research in Germany, for example the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH). Graduate training is provided at universities and non-university research institutions in cooperation with universities. Here, besides the DFG also the Helmholtz Association (research on grand challenges) and the Max Planck Society offer graduate training programmes in or strongly related to artificial intelligence research. There also exist PhD programmes and PhD funding by the state governments, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and foundations.

## COORDINATED RESEARCH PROGRAMMES FUNDED BY DFG

### Collaborative Research Centres (CRC) (Sonderforschungsbereiche; SFB)

- established at a single university (standard CRC) or by multiple nearly equal partners (Transregio variation, up to 3 sites)
- present outstanding research programmes, crossing the boundaries of disciplines, institutes, departments and faculties
- research programme must correspond to and strengthen the research profile of host university(ies)
- may also incorporate projects at further (research) institutions (both academic and commercial, inside or outside Germany)
- funded by the DFG for a period of up to 12 years (3 four-year periods)

The following CRCs are currently funded in artificial intelligence research:

- "Providing Information by Resource-Constrained Data Analysis" (CRC 876), funded since 2011  
speaker: Katharina Morik, Dortmund  
contact: <https://sfb876.tu-dortmund.de>
- "Robust Vision – Inference Principles and Neural Mechanisms" (CRC 1233), funded since 2017  
speaker: Matthias Bethge, Tübingen  
contact: <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/research/core-research/collaborative-research-centers/crc-1233/>
- "Data Assimilation – The Seamless Integration of Data and Models" (CRC 1294), funded since 2017  
speaker: Sebastian Reich, Potsdam  
contact: [www.sfb1294.de](http://www.sfb1294.de)
- "Everyday Activity Science and Engineering (EASE)" (CRC 1320), funded since 2017  
speaker: Michael Beetz, Bremen  
contact: <https://ease-crc.org/>
- "Foundations of Workflows for Large-Scale Scientific Data Analysis (FONDA)" (CRC 1404), funded since 2020  
speaker: Ulf Leser, Berlin  
contact: <https://fonda.hu-berlin.de/>

### Collaborative Research Centres/Transregios (TRR) (SFB/Transregio; TRR)

The following CRC/Transregios are currently funded in artificial intelligence research:

- "Quantitative Methods for Visual Computing" (TRR 161), funded since 2015  
speaker: Daniel Weiskopf, Stuttgart; partner universities/institutions in Stuttgart, Konstanz  
contact: [www.sfbtr161.de](http://www.sfbtr161.de)
- "Crossmodal Learning: Adaptivity, Prediction and Interaction" (TRR 169), funded since 2016  
speaker: Jianwei Zhang, Hamburg; partner universities/institutions in Hamburg, Beijing  
contact: [www.crossmodal-learning.org](http://www.crossmodal-learning.org)
- "Foundations of Perspicuous Software Systems – Enabling Comprehension in a Cyber-Physical World" (TRR 248), funded since 2019  
speaker: Holger Hermanns, Saarbrücken; partner universities/institutions in Saarbrücken, Dresden  
contact: [www.perspicuous-computing.science](http://www.perspicuous-computing.science)
- "Constructing Explainability" (TRR 318), funded since 2021  
speaker: Katharina Rohlfing, Paderborn; partner university/institution in Bielefeld  
contact: <https://tr318.uni-paderborn.de>

### Research Units (FOR) (Forscherguppen; FOR; not displayed)

- specific medium-term research projects whose anticipated findings would not be able to be achieved within the scope of the individual grants programme but only by a coordinated effort
- proposals can be submitted to the DFG at any time, decision is made in a two-step process
- funded by the DFG up to 8 years (2 four-year periods)

Currently the following Research Units in or strongly related to artificial intelligence are funded:

- "Memristive Devices for Neural Systems" (FOR 2093), funded since 2014  
speaker: Heermann Kohlstädt, Kiel  
contact: [www.for2093.uni-kiel.de](http://www.for2093.uni-kiel.de)
- "Anticipating Human Behavior" (FOR 2535), funded since 2017  
speaker: Jürgen Gall, Bonn  
contact: <https://pages.iai.uni-bonn.de/FOR2535>

### Priority Programmes (SPP) (Schwerpunktprogramme; SPP; not displayed)

- large research networks to unite research capacity all over Germany in an emerging field or a field expected to yield major breakthroughs in the near future
- fields chosen once a year by the DFG's Senate from proposals by scientists of all research disciplines
- enhanced quality of research through the use of new methods and forms of collaboration in emerging fields
- added value through interdisciplinary cooperation and networking
- at the beginning and after three years of funding, a call is launched to all scientists who want to contribute with a project to the given field of research
- usually funded for 6 years by the DFG (e.g. 2 three-year periods)

Currently the following Priority Programmes in or strongly related to artificial intelligence are funded:

- "Robust Argumentation Machines (RATIO)" (SPP 1999), funded since 2017  
speaker: Philipp Cimiano, Bielefeld  
contact: <http://ratio.sc.cit-ec.uni-bielefeld.de>
- "Scalable Data Management on Future Hardware" (SPP 2037), funded since 2017  
speaker: Kai-Uwe Sattler, Ilmenau  
contact: [www.dfg-spp2037.de](http://www.dfg-spp2037.de)
- "Computational Connectomics" (SPP 2041), funded since 2017  
speaker: Jochen Triesch, Frankfurt  
contact: <https://spp2041.de/>
- "Evolutionary Optimisation of Neuronal Processing" (SPP 2205), funded since 2020  
speaker: Fred Wolf, Göttingen  
contact: [www.uni-goettingen.de/de/618311.html](http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/618311.html)
- "Memristive Devices Toward Smart Technical Systems" (SPP 2262), funded since 2020  
speaker: Ronald Tetzlaff, Dresden  
contact: <https://memristec.de>
- "Theoretical Foundations of Deep Learning" (SPP 2298), funded since 2020  
speaker: Gitta Kutyniok, München  
contact: [www.spp2298.de](http://www.spp2298.de)
- "Machine Learning in Chemical Engineering. Knowledge Meets Data: Interpretability, Extrapolation, Reliability, Trust" (SPP 2331), funded since 2020  
speaker: Alexander Mitsos, Aachen  
contact: [www.chemengml.org](http://www.chemengml.org)

## MORE RESSOURCES

- Plattform Lernende Systeme – Germany's Platform for Artificial Intelligence  
[www.plattform-lernende-systeme.de](http://www.plattform-lernende-systeme.de)

## CLUSTERS OF EXCELLENCE

### Clusters of Excellence (EXC) (Exzellenzcluster; EXC)

- launched by the German government in order to boost excellent research through additional funds
- project-based funding in internationally competitive fields of research at universities or university consortia
- often include doctoral training programmes
- DFG is responsible for developing and implementing this funding line

The following cluster have a strong focus in artificial intelligence research:

- "Science of Intelligence (SciInt)" (EXC 2002), funded since 2019  
speaker: Oliver Brock, Berlin  
contact: [www.scienceofintelligence.de](http://www.scienceofintelligence.de)
- "Machine Learning: New Perspectives for Science" (EXC 2064), funded since 2019  
speaker: Philipp Berens, Ulrike von Luxburg, Tübingen  
contact: [www.ml-in-science.uni-tuebingen.de](http://www.ml-in-science.uni-tuebingen.de)
- "Internet of Production (IoP)" (EXC 2023), funded since 2019  
speaker: Christian Brecher, Aachen  
contact: [www.iop.rwth-aachen.de](http://www.iop.rwth-aachen.de)
- "PhenoRob – Robotics and Phenotyping for Sustainable Crop Production" (EXC 2070), funded since 2019  
speaker: Heiner Kuhlmann, Bonn  
contact: [www.phenorob.de](http://www.phenorob.de)

## GRADUATE TRAINING FUNDED BY DFG

### Research Training Groups (RTG) (Graduiertenkollegs; GRK)

- established at universities
- may have foreign partner(s) – International Research Training Groups
- promote young researchers: doctoral training within the framework of a focused research programme and a structured training strategy
- encourage early scientific independence
- high demand for this funding programme, since it permits doctoral students to work on a family of related thesis topics, thereby encouraging fruitful discussions and collaboration between them
- supported by the DFG for up to 9 years (2 four-and-a-half-year periods)

Currently the following RTG in or strongly related to artificial intelligence are funded:

- "User-Centred Social Media" (RTG 2167), funded since 2015  
speaker: Norbert Fuhr, Duisburg-Essen  
contact: [www.inf.uni-due.de/projects/ucsm/index.html](http://www.inf.uni-due.de/projects/ucsm/index.html)
- "Uncertainty and Randomness in Algorithms, Verification, and Logic (UNRAVEL)" (RTG 2236), funded since 2017  
speaker: Joost-Pieter Katoen, Aachen  
contact: [www.unravel.rwth-aachen.de](http://www.unravel.rwth-aachen.de)
- "Mathematical Complexity Reduction (CoRe)" (RTG 2297), funded since 2017  
speaker: Sebastian Sager, Magdeburg  
contact: [www.mathcore.ovgu.de](http://www.mathcore.ovgu.de)
- "Computational Cognition" (RTG 2340), funded since 2018  
speaker: Gordon Pipa, Osnabrück  
contact: [www.comco.uni-osnabrueck.de](http://www.comco.uni-osnabrueck.de)
- "Differential Equation- and Data-driven Models in Life Sciences and Fluid Dynamics (DAEDALUS)" (RTG 2433), funded since 2018  
speaker: Wolf-Christian Müller, Berlin  
contact: <https://daedalus.berlin/>
- "Continuous Verification of Cyber-Physical Systems (CONVEY)" (RTG 2428), funded since 2019  
speaker: Helmut Seidl, Munich  
contact: <https://convey.in.tum.de>

### Integrated Research Training Groups within CRC/Transregios

- structured doctoral training for scientific coworkers within CRC/Transregio projects

The following groups are currently funded in artificial intelligence:

- RTG within "Providing Information by Resource-Constrained Data Analysis" (CRC 876), funded since 2011  
speaker: Katharina Morik, Dortmund  
contact: <https://sfb876.tu-dortmund.de/SFP/sfb876-gk.html>
- RTG within "Data Assimilation – The Seamless Integration of Data and Models" (CRC 1294), funded since 2017  
speaker: Sebastian Reich, Potsdam  
contact: [www.sfb1294.de/graduate-school](http://www.sfb1294.de/graduate-school)
- RTG within "Everyday Activity Science and Engineering (EASE)" (CRC 1320), funded since 2017  
speaker: Michael Beetz, Bremen  
contact: <https://ease-crc.org/ease-academy>
- RTG within "Foundations of Workflows for Large-Scale Scientific Data Analysis (FONDA)" (CRC 1404), funded since 2020  
speaker: Ulf Leser, Berlin  
contact: <https://fonda.hu-berlin.de>
- RTG within "Quantitative Methods for Visual Computing" (TRR 161), funded since 2015  
speaker: Daniel Weiskopf, Stuttgart; partner universities/institutions in Stuttgart, Konstanz  
contact: [www.sfbtr161.de/graduateschool](http://www.sfbtr161.de/graduateschool)
- RTG within "Crossmodal Learning: Adaptivity, Prediction and Interaction" (TRR 169), funded since 2016  
speaker: Jianwei Zhang, Hamburg; partner universities/institutions in Hamburg, Beijing  
contact: [www.crossmodal-learning.org](http://www.crossmodal-learning.org)
- RTG within "Constructing explainability" (TRR 318), funded since 2021  
speaker: Katharina Rohlfing, Paderborn; partner university/institution in Bielefeld  
contact: <https://tr318.uni-paderborn.de/projekte/rtg>

## GRADUATE TRAINING AT NON-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

### International Max Planck Research Schools (IMPRS)

Doctoral training at Max Planck Institutes in close collaboration with universities under excellent research conditions:

- IMPRS on Trustworthy Computing  
speaker: Anja Feldmann, Saarbrücken  
contact: [www.imprs-trust.mpg.de](http://www.imprs-trust.mpg.de)
- IMPRS for Intelligent Systems (IS)  
speaker: Katharine J. Kuchenbecker, Stuttgart  
contact: <http://imprs.is.mpg.de>
- IMPRS for Advanced Methods in Process and Systems Engineering  
speaker: Kai Sundmacher, Magdeburg  
contact: [www.mpi-magdeburg.mpg.de/imprs](http://www.mpi-magdeburg.mpg.de/imprs)

## SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

- Gesellschaft für Informatik e.V. (GI), Fachbereich Künstliche Intelligenz (FBKI) – German Informatics Society, Section for Artificial Intelligence  
contact: <https://fbki.gi.de>
- Bernstein Network Computational Neuroscience  
contact: [www.berstein-netzwerk.de](http://www.berstein-netzwerk.de)
- Cyber Valley  
contact: <https://cyber-valley.de>
- AI Frankfurt  
contact: [www.ai-frankfurt.de](http://www.ai-frankfurt.de) [DE]
- Ki.NRW  
contact: [www.ki.nrw](http://www.ki.nrw)
- #ki\_berlin  
contact: <https://ki-berlin.de>

### DFG

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) is the central self-governing research funding organisation in Germany. It serves all branches of science and the humanities by funding research projects at universities and other research institutions. The DFG promotes excellence and quality by selecting the best research projects on a competitive basis and actively encourages international research cooperation. It is particularly dedicated to the promotion of young researchers and to gender equality in science and academia. It also advises legislatures and government agencies on scientific matters. In organisational terms, the DFG is an association under private law that receives the large majority of its funds from Germany's Federal (69%) and state (29%) governments. In 2020 the DFG's annual budget was 3.3 billion euros.

In 2020, the DFG's annual budget for computer science reached 217.8 mio. euros (2016: 198.7 mio. euros). Individual grants still form the basis of DFG's funding of computer science aside the displayed coordinated programmes. They are awarded to established and junior researchers (starting at the post-doc level) to support individual or joint projects as well as to post-docs as support for their positions, as fellowships for research stays abroad, or even to build up their own first research group.

Sources: DFG Annual Report 2020, websites Fraunhofer Society, Leibniz Association, Max Planck Society, Helmholtz Association © DFG, October 2021

AN INITIATIVE OF THE



Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Research in Germany  
Land of Ideas

## Contact

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DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft  
German Research Foundation

